THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Demand for a Modern Christian Creed.

Dr. A. B. Macaulay, Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Glasgow, enquired in a letter to the *Times* of February 17 whether the Archbishops could inform us 'where a clear and compendious statement of the Christian faith is to be found? . . . that he may run that readeth it.' The Professor complains that the Apostles' Creed, 'with its ambiguous clauses and glaring omissions,' is inadequate to meet modern needs. Dr. Malden, Dean of Wells, in a letter of February 22, chides the Emeritus Professor of Systematic Theology for not being satisfied with the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed for this purpose.

Dr. Macaulay aptly remarks that the venerable document pseudonymously known as the Apostles' Creed has often been modified in the past and that it is quite time it was modified again. We are of the opinion that it would be a mistake to-day to modify the Apostles' Creed. Such venerable documents may rightly be replaced in use by something more adequate for modern needs, but to modify them jars on our historic sense unless some more ancient form of them be substituted in the place of a later and corrupt text. We agree, however, entirely with Dr. Macaulay in his desire to substitute to-day something

more adequate. The Apostles' Creed for modern youth is a very unsatisfactory formula whether it be used for instructing them in the Christian faith or as a vehicle for their expression of it. Once again we venture in these pages to reprint two modern substitutes for it. The first can be found set to music in *Songs of Praise*, No. 433, and consists of extracts from the writings of St. John. The second was composed by the late Dr. Douglas White.

(1) We believe

God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

God is Light: and if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

God is Love: and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.

Jesus is the Son of God: and God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

We are children of God: and He hath given us of His Spirit.

If we confess our sins: He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. *Amen.*

(2) I believe in God, the Father of all:
And in Jesus Christ, Revealer of God and Saviour of men:
And in the Spirit of Holiness, which is the Spirit of God and of Jesus
By which Spirit man is made divine.
I acknowledge the communion of all faithful people
In beauty, goodness and truth:
And I believe in the forgiveness of sins,
The glory of righteousness,
The victory of love, and the Life Eternal.

We have no desire to see any substitute for the Nicene Creed at the Holy Communion Office, yet we do desire to see a return to the more primitive form of that creed in which 'we believe' is used for 'I believe' and the Virgin Birth and *filioque* clauses are omitted.

The Christian Character of British Citizens.

If the war has revealed to the public the very defective religious knowledge possessed by the children of the nation, and also indirectly that of their parents, it has brought out into amazing relief the Christian character of British citizens of every class. Their courage, unselfishness, cheerfulness, self-control and indomitable confidence in Christian values testify to

the existence of Christian springs of influence, both hereditary and contemporary, which constitute the very essence of our British civilization. Religion has been described as 'the inner side of civilization.' Whatever may be the defects on the outer side of our British civilization — and we believe they have been growing steadily less in many departments — the inner side is still, indeed we believe increasingly, Christian.

The clergy and ministers of religion do not perhaps get as much credit for this as some of them deserve. The following extract from a letter by the most influential of Manchester's parish priests, Canon Peter Green, contributed to the *Church Times* of February 21, indicates that paucity of attendance at public worship in their churches is perhaps as little measure of the real influence of the local clergy as it is of the religious character of their parishioners:

> 'When I remember the conduct of the clergy and Free Church ministers during two nights of flame and terror, when a certain "inland town in the north-west" was bombed, I glow with admiration and gratitude. I could fill two issues of your paper with examples. Here are a few.
>
> A lady secretary of a convalescent home to which forty men and women, bombed out of their houses, had been sent, told me they never left off saying what they owed to the rector and his wife. As long as one person lived who remembered Christmas, 1940, Mr. and Mrs. P., they declared, would be loved and prayed for.
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> A curate in another parish left his wife and child in a shelter and ran down a long street, lit by burning houses and machine-gunned by a low-flying plane, to calm three hundred women and children in a mission hall, to organize a party to make them tea, to lead them in prayer and after a couple of hours to leave them calm and happy.
>
> An A.R.P. man said that if anyone in England deserved the Victoria Cross it was the rector of his parish, who never had his clothes off from the morning of December 22 till the evening of December 24. He was always where there was most danger, encouraging the fearful, helping the wounded, and praying with the dying.
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> I happened to mention in the Town Hall what one clergyman had done. The Town Clerk looked across at the Mayor and said quietly, "Just what we should expect of him. We know him."

The Three Archbishops and National Religious Education.

A most important statement and appeal in support of national Christian education signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales was issued on February 12. In their introduction to this document, the Archbishops state that

it has been promulgated only after full consultation with all their Diocesan Bishops : that its policy has the full agreement of the leaders of the Free Churches : that the convictions expressed in it are increasingly shared by the teaching profession.

In support of the last statement the Archbishops cite the following resolution passed unanimously by the Headmasters' Conference :

> 'That this Conference, representing schools containing members of various denominations of Christianity, expresses its strong conviction that the Christian Faith should be the basis and inspiration of their work, and, while each member remains loyal to his own Church, they pledge themselves to promote that general object with all their power.'

The Archbishops also added :

> 'If we do not dwell on the secondary schools at any length, it is because we cordially welcome the recommendations of the Spens Report in this matter of religious teaching' (Chapter v).

In the matter of the Church schools the Archbishops write :

> 'We regard our own Church schools as a trust which should be preserved for the sake of the ideals for which they stand. . . . We earnestly appeal to all Church people to do their utmost to maintain them in real efficiency, and to see that they hold a place in the national system of education worthy of their high aims.'

The five points in the Archbishops' proposed scheme of national Christian education are as follows :

> '(1) In all schools a Christian education should be given to all the scholars (except, of course, in so far as any parents may wish to withdraw their children from it). The religious instruction should be entrusted to teachers willing and competent to give it. We desire that no teacher should be prejudiced in his professional career by his unwillingness to give this teaching ; but all teachers will agree that it is a sound principle of their profession that the teaching of any subject should be in the hands of persons qualified by personal interest, by knowledge and by training to give it.
>
> (2) We urge that religious knowledge and the imparting of it should be an "optional subject," not merely an "additional option," in the course of training for the teacher's certificate. This means that it should count in the gaining of that certificate. We also urge that the Local Education Authorities should further develop the post-certificate training courses in this subject arranged by them, and should actively encourage teachers to attend these courses.
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> (3) Where only one or few teachers in the school are duly qualified to give Christian teaching, we urge that it should be made permissible to give this teaching at any period within school hours, so that the same teacher may teach several classes at different periods.
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> (4) In order that the importance of the religious teaching may be recognized, we urge that it should be inspected in respect of its methods by H.M. Inspectors, or by some other duly authorized persons.

(5) We urge that in all schools the time-table should be so arranged as to provide for an act of worship on the part of the whole school at the beginning of the school day.

Further, we regard the development all over the country of the "Agreed Syllabus," that is a syllabus of religious teaching drawn up by representatives of the Christian communions, of the teachers and of the Local Education Authorities in any area, as one of the most hopeful signs of the times. We hope that where a good agreed syllabus has been adopted in the area it may be used in Church schools on certain days of the week, and that an accredited teacher (or teachers) representing the Free Churches may be welcomed in these schools to give special instruction to Free Church children, if their parents so desire, at times when distinctive Church teaching is given in the school generally.'

Such a scheme, if implemented, would not only do much for the religious education of the children of this country, but would raise to higher levels the general understanding of what the Christian religion really is and wherein its true values lie.

Conflicting Ideals of Christian Education.

The two following letters published in the *Times* of Feb. 20 and 24 respectively from the Bishop of Oxford and from the Rev. V. J. K. Brook, Fellow of All Souls' and Censor of St. Catherine's Society, represent two profoundly different conceptions of the nature of the Christian religion and how to teach it.

'Sir,—All your readers will have welcomed the letter from the Bishop of Liverpool in your issue of February 15. It is only right, however, to point out that its implications, when carefully studied, may not entirely fulfil the hopes which its first reading inspires. At the risk of appearing ungracious, I venture to utter a warning that perhaps the road to unanimity is not so smooth as the letter suggests.

The Bishop states as the fundamental premiss of religious (and indeed of all) education, 'Truth must be introduced to the young in a form which out of their own experience they can naturally assimilate. They must receive it, if at all, in terms of life as they see it.'

What does this mean when we apply it to a child of Anglican parents in, let us say, Liverpool? The child's "experience"—its view of "life as it sees it"—will be moulded by home, school, and parish church. Even more than by the parish church, however, is it natural to hope that its religious outlook will be dominated by the great Cathedral on the hill (why else should Liverpool be building this cathedral?), and by the sight of the Bishop, present upon his throne on all the great festivals of the Church's year. Such an experience would, indeed, be the starting point for a vivid scheme of Christian education. We should begin by telling the inquiring child-mind about the Church in this country; its continuity (through the long centuries of our national history) with the primitive Church, and so with the Apostles, guaranteed by the succession of its bishops from the earliest times; its task of witnessing to the Incarnation of the Son of God

and the Mission of the Holy Spirit; its culminating privilege, the offer of redeeming and sanctifying grace through the sacramental channels entrusted to it by its Founder. Thus the whole scheme of Christian truth as taught by the Church of England springs naturally, immediately, and spontaneously from the child's experience of the cathedral on the hill.

I wish I could convince myself that no one will bring the accusation of "sectarian doctrine," "dogma," or "definiteness" against this approach to religious education — which seems to me the only type of approach logically permissible to those who accept (as I do) the Bishop of Liverpool's premiss. If it does escape this accusation, then the Bishop has indeed pointed us to a real and glorious opportunity of advance. If on the other hand it does not, may it not be because his premiss, rightly understood, leads to conclusions other than those which he himself would have us draw from it?

Yours, etc.,

KENNETH OXON.'

'SIR,—To many Anglicans the letter you recently published from the Bishop of Oxford will seem not, as he feared, ungracious, but lamentable and perverse. It is a minor point that many of us still think that Bishops, even on the great festivals of the year, can be better employed than in sitting on their thrones for the youth of the diocese to gaze at. What is really serious is that the letter may be taken to suggest that the doctrines of the Church and the Ministry are almost the central theme of Christianity. I would not for a moment wish to deny their importance; they are probably the main cause of difficulty in this country now between the Anglican and other Churches. When the various Christian bodies are pressing to gain a real place in education for the fundamental Christian beliefs, about which all agree, it is a pity to lay such stress on the doctrines—and those not the central ones —about which they disagree. That is why the letter seems lamentable.

It seems perverse because everyone knows that the natural point from which to start Christian education is Christ in the Gospels, not the Bishop on his throne. It is to be hoped that non-Anglicans will not regard the Bishop's letter as expressing the sole Anglican point of view.

I am yours, etc.,

V. J. K. BROOK.'

When an eighteenth-century English bishop was asked, What is the Christian religion? he replied, 'I should prefer to tell you not what it is, but where it may be found,' and laying his hand on the Bible he added, 'It is to be found here.' That answer reflects the conviction of the Reformed Church of England that 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation' (Article VI). All the Reformed Churches stand together here. For them, primarily, to teach children the Christian religion is to tell them 'The old, old story of Jesus and His love.' If we could add to that story the history of the Christian

Church we should do well, but to do this will take us immediately into a sphere where there are acute differences of opinion among Christian men.

On the one hand we have that valuation of the Church so triumphantly expressed in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*:

'The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is his new creation
By water and the word:
From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy bride,
With his own blood he bought her,
And for her life he died.'

To this may be added the Catholic conception of the Church: that she is the sole means of human salvation and that only by reception of the sacramental grace, which her Apostolic Ministry dispenses, can man be saved. Then we have that estimation of the Church, which is factual rather than ideal, enunciated by the late Alfred Fawkes in a sermon preached before the University of Cambridge: 'The Church, a necessary evil' wherein 'the evil be ever mingled with the good,' as Article XXVI sorrowfully confesses. Then we have the view that the organized ministry of the Christian Church is not necessary for human salvation, the true agent in that salvation being the Holy Spirit or the Spiritual Christ. This is the conviction of such bodies as the Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren. It is finely expressed in the hymn of the China Inland Mission:

'Christ the Lord of Life hath sent me
To the midnight lands,
Mine the mighty Consecration
Of the Pierced Hands.'

There is truth in each of these views, but it is clear that at present the teaching of Church history as a part of our educational system in the schools of the nation, where they are undenominational, is impossible. We are therefore entirely in agreement with Mr. Brook's just and courageous contention.

On the other hand, as English Churchmen engaged in teaching English Church children the Christian religion, we are strong believers in the value of making use of local history, in which the ancient Parish Church and the Diocesan Cathedral play an important part.

We also believe, as does the Bishop of Oxford, in the dramatic symbolism of the Sacraments as a vehicle for teaching the Christian religion to young people. But here there are strict limitations. We pray in the Communion Office that the clergy may 'rightly and duly administer Thy Holy Sacraments,' which clearly means adherence to the ceremonial of the Prayer Book. If this be not done the Sacraments may become the means of teaching not truth, but error.

In a church well known to the Bishop of Oxford a mother took her little son to the Holy Communion for the first time. When, at the Consecration, the Sanctus bell tinkled, she said to her child, 'Kneel down; Jesus is coming.' The child asked, 'Mother, is He coming on a bicycle?'

Christianity, Totalitarianism and Liberalism.

Professor Gilbert Murray in an arresting article entitled 'Nazi Doctrine and the Christian Tradition,' published in the *Guardian* of February 21, deals with the real ground of the hostility of the Nazis and Fascists to the Christian tradition. Dr. Gilbert Murray, who is a humanist of the purest type to which neither the prefix Pagan nor Christian may be attached, observes that it is not Christianity in its Papal form to which the Dictators are opposed any more than they are opposed to Communism.

> 'If (writes Dr. Gilbert Murray) we take the Roman Church as the most typical and central expression of Christianity in Europe, one cannot help noticing that for a long time at any rate a large part of it was predominantly pro-Nazi and decidedly pro-Fascist. People are very slow to get out of their old ruts or forget their old enmities: and on the whole the Catholics saw Hitler vigorously denouncing the very people whom they were accustomed to denounce. His methods might be brutal, but after all, on the main issue, they were on his side rather than on that of the Communists, the Jews, the Social Democrats, the Liberal intelligentsia, and those beings who seem so harmless in Protestant England and so sinister in Catholic Europe, the Free-masons.'

But the situation has altered since then. The Totalitarianism of Rome has realized that she cannot tolerate any other form of totalitarianism, particularly German Totalitarianism. Meanwhile the Totalitarian Dictators have altered their attitude towards Communism. In the earlier days of the Fascist and

Nazi movements war to the death was proclaimed against the Communists. But to-day, in the Totalitarian States the Communists are not only tolerated but are even viewed with friendly eyes. There is no quarrel with them. Dr. Gilbert Murray writes :

> 'Hitler is completely reconciled with the Communists : he sides with Socialists against the "pluto-democracies." Mussolini has private parties with his old Communist associates : Franco, I am told, has anarchists in his government.'

We, in England, have been slow to recognize the changing situation. This is due in some measure to our failure to distinguish between Christianity and what Dr. Gilbert Murray calls the 'Christian tradition.' It is the 'Christian tradition,' not necessarily organized Christianity, which the Nazis and Fascists cannot tolerate.

There are forms of Christianity which could secure not only toleration but even comfort in Nazi and Fascist States, but these forms are not loyal to what Dr. Gilbert Murray calls the 'Christian tradition.' We, however, should prefer to call it, not the 'Christian tradition'—which for Christian theologians is concerned with dogmas and liturgies—but the Christian spirit, which maintains the right of men to worship and obey God in accordance with the demands of their moral and spiritual consciousness. It is the spirit of Christ which teaches that divine authority is above all human authority, and claims freedom for the human spirit to obey that authority, rather than human authority, when a conflict arises between the two. This is the very essence of Christian Liberalism, as Dr. Gilbert Murray points out, and it is Liberalism of this Christian kind to which all forms of totalitarianism, whether political or ecclesiastical, are bitterly and irreconcilably opposed.

This, then, is the element in Christianity which is supremely worth preserving. It is the very spirit also of democracy, rightly understood, and it is moreover the spirit of all true social and intellectual progress. This spirit, so Dr. Gilbert Murray seems to hold, came into Christianity mainly through Hellenic influences. Here we venture, with great deference, to differ from him. It came into Christianity from Jesus Christ. He was the great spiritual and moral liberator. 'With freedom did Christ set us free' : 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,' so St.

Paul asserted in the middle of the first century. It is true that Christ's followers, and especially organized Christianity, have been slow to realize this truth. Indeed, they have often denied it in word and deed. It is true also that this spirit of freedom was a most important factor in Hellenic civilization, and the supreme martyr for religious freedom in Greece was the sane and saintly Socrates. Notwithstanding the remarkable contribution made to Christian culture by the Neoplatonists of Alexandria in the third and fourth centuries, it was not until the Renaissance 'when Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand' that a better understanding ensued of the character and implications of Christian freedom, and to this advance undoubtedly Hellenism made a great contribution in the form of Christian humanism. Whilst maintaining that Christian freedom is essentially the gift of Christ to Christendom, we have also to confess that since the Reformation those Christians have been most loyal to that spirit who possessed Hellenic culture and have been loyal to the Platonic tradition in Christianity. Although Athens knew a spirit of freedom such as Jerusalem and Rome never enjoyed, yet it is only 'the Jerusalem from above' which is free, 'which is the mother of us all' (*Gal.* iv. 26). This is the Christian ideal, but where and to what extent it has been as yet realized on earth will receive very different answers. What is certain is that he who really is an understanding Christian will be a citizen of no other city—if we may venture to plagiarise Plato's noble conclusion in his discussion of this theme in the *Republic* (*Resp.* ix, *s.f.*, p. 592).

The Malvern Conference.

Nearly a century ago, in the era of the 'hungry forties,' when every throne in Europe was tottering, the Christian Social Movement took its rise in this country under the leadership of those great Broad Churchmen, Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, who demanded that Christian men must work for the improvement of social and economic conditions where these conditions were detrimental to human welfare and happiness. The impressive and influentially attended Conference which met at Malvern in January, by the invitation and

under the presidency of Archbishop Temple, testifies to the degree in which the Social Gospel has permeated the Church of England. At that Conference twenty bishops, forty deans, provosts, archdeacons and canons, eighty representative parochial clergy and eighty members of the laity, including a number of headmasters, assembled to discuss present-day social problems and their solution in the light of Christian principles and experience.

The Church of England used to be described — not entirely justly, since great Liberal Churchmen like Mr. Gladstone and Bishop Percival of Hereford were among its practising members — as 'the Conservative Party at prayer.' As the result of the Malvern Conference the Church will seem to some to have exchanged its old label for a new one — 'the Communist Party at Mass.' All such labels are libels. To-day the citizens of this country, as a whole, are overwhelmingly in favour of social reform. This is proved up to the hilt by the large measures of social reform which have been implemented by the State during the last fifty years and the enormously improved social and economic conditions which have resulted during that period. Where, among British citizens, divisions of opinion lie is in the sphere of methods. Some are for Communism of the Russian kind and the drastic methods which its enforcement entails: others are for social amelioration slowly but surely achieved by Fabian tactics in which tentative experiment and a profound respect for personal liberty and initiative predominate.

In the case of the Church of England, the situation is somewhat different. In the membership of that Church there are many who are sincere and vigorous supporters of social reform, but who would maintain that they are such because they are British citizens, not because they are members of the Christian Church. They are apprehensive lest the moral and spiritual duties of that Church should be neglected as a consequence of its clergy devoting their energies to political policies of economic and social reformation. That, in the eyes of these Churchmen, is to replace the worship of God by the worship of Baal and to degrade the Christian pulpit to the level of a political platform. These people, whom the late Canon Nairn loved to describe as 'the Quiet in the land,' constitute by far the greater part of

practising Churchmen at the present time. Rightly or wrongly, they regard the Church of England as a religious communion which is primarily concerned with securing right relations between the human soul and God, not with the establishing of ideal conditions in the world of economics and politics. They are convinced that if the English Church induces the English people to seek the Kingdom of God first, all things necessary for this life will be added unto them, and that although as English citizens they ought to be concerned with the economic, social and political situation of their country, they are not, as Christians and Churchmen, primarily concerned with these matters. As Christians they are concerned with making the tree good, and are convinced that if they succeed in doing that in their own case and in that of their neighbour, they will end by making the fruit good also. Therefore, in considering the significance of the policy and doctrine of the Malvern Conference, so far as the Church of England is concerned, we are compelled to bear in mind the large body of Churchmen who not only were not there, but were not represented by those who were there.

As a consequence, the Conference largely represented what is popularly known as the 'politics in the pulpit' clergy and the laity who favour this procedure. When this is borne in mind the extraordinary moderation of the Malvern document of conclusions should comfort those absent Churchmen who may have feared that the Church of England had turned Communist. The impression made on us by the report of the conclusions of the Conference is like that made on Warren Hastings when he reviewed his Indian career: 'When I recall the vastness of my opportunities, I am astonished at my moderation.' We ought to add that perhaps the only exception among the official speakers was Miss Dorothy Sayers, the prophetess of the Conference, who did use her opportunities to the full. The moderation of the Conference was no doubt largely due to Dr. Temple's judicious leadership and discriminating preparation.

The *Times* of January 11 thus summarized the conclusions of the Malvern Conference:

> The Archbishop of York's conference at Malvern yesterday adopted unanimously a document of conclusions. This declared that the Church could never commit itself to any proposed change in the structure of

society as being a self-sufficient means of salvation. But it could point to those features of existing society which were contrary to divine justice and act as stumbling blocks, making it harder for men to lead Christian lives.

'In our present situation,' it added, 'we believe that the maintenance of that part of the structure of our society by which the ultimate ownership of the principal industrial resources of the community can be vested in the hands of private owners may be such a stumbling block. On the one hand, it may deprive the poorest members of the community of the essentials of life. On the other, while these resources can be so owned men will strive for their ownership for themselves. As a consequence a way of life founded on the supremacy of the economic motive will remain, which is contrary to God's plan for mankind. The time has come for Christians to proclaim the need for striving towards a form of society in which, while the essential values of the individual human personality are preserved, the continuance of these abuses will be no longer possible.'

What do these conclusions really amount to? That the members of the Malvern Conference believe that in our present situation the ultimate ownership of the principal economic resources of the community should be vested in the State. They believe that this would help to promote the good life among our fellow-citizens.

At present, war conditions are compelling us to make experiments in this direction, and the community will learn much from these experiments. State ownership of our natural resources and the distribution of their products is apt to appear more seductive as an ideal than satisfying as an experience. None of us can foresee whether the war is going to revolutionize the economic structure of our society or merely remove some of its more flagrant defects. What is cheering is that our pulpit politicians do not demand that in order to be Christians we must be Communists and that the State *must* implement their economic policy. In this connection the Archbishop of York aptly cited the dictum of another prelate that

'It is the business of Lambeth to remind Westminster of its responsibility to God, but this does not mean that Westminster is responsible to Lambeth.'

THE FUTURE OF THE MODERN CHURCHMEN'S UNION

By the Rev. T. J. Wood, M.A., Organizing Secretary of the Modern Churchmen's Union.

THE task of the prophet has one advantage, that his utterances can only be proved false by subsequent events. But this is hardly the time to indulge in prophecies: the factors which will make the future are too numerous, too diverse, too uncertain, for anyone to forecast the condition in which politics, society or religion will emerge from the war. All we can be certain of is that the future will be nothing like the past, and any attempt to relate existing organizations to the future world on the assumption that other things will revert to pre-war conditions would be folly. Our business is to preserve, as far as we can, the ideals which history has proved most worth while, and organizations must only expect and ask to be preserved in so far as they shall prove fit to be the medium for the expression of those ideals in the new conditions of the post-war world.

Whether the Modern Churchmen's Union will survive, or is worth survival, will depend upon whether its ideals ought to survive and whether its methods are such as to ensure survival. This paper is intended to raise a discussion upon those questions, rather than to answer them with a blue-print plan for the future policy of the Union.

The ideal of the Union is the freedom of religious thought and expression. As an ideal that needs no defence at a time when the whole weight of the democracies is being thrown into the preservation of political freedom, for freedom is not merely a political virtue, it is a religious one as well. It is actually an economic one also, though men are not so ready to acknowledge the consequences of that doctrine yet. One would have thought that it followed without question that the doctrine of political freedom necessarily entailed that of religious freedom, but in actual experience men will often be perfectly democratic politically and economically and yet quite authoritarian in matters of religion. The infallibility of the Church can be asserted by those who deny the supremacy of the State.

There will therefore always be the need for such a Society as ours to insist upon religious freedom, even if the State should become yet more democratic than it has been.

But freedom has its limits, its sphere of reference, and our problem is not religious freedom with respect to the State (though that is a vital issue in many countries) but religious freedom within the Christian Church itself, and the meaning of that freedom must be sought in relation both to the society in which freedom is claimed and the subject in which it is to be exercised. Here, if I may say so, it does not appear that the policy of the Union has always been sufficiently definite nor sufficiently practical.

The society in which the Union exists to claim religious freedom is the Church of England. We are naturally interested in the rights of intellectual liberty in all Churches, but we cannot intervene in a dispute as to orthodoxy in the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa; we have no *locus standi* in relation to them. We are members of the Church of England, and our main interest (as Modernists) is, I suggest, the maintenance and enlargement of liberal religious thought within that body. I mention this because I sometimes find a tendency for Modernists to speak as though all denominational barriers were meaningless and irrelevant and re-union an accomplished fact. It is perfectly true that modern scholarship has shown that many of the issues which have divided Churches in the past, and do divide them to-day, are due to controversies which are irrelevant to the main stream of Christian thought, but we shall not help the cause either of religious freedom or of unity by pretending that the barriers are not there. We are ready to acknowledge that loyalty to Christ is more important than loyalty to Christianity; we all realise that the Christian Church, in all its branches, is a feeble representation of the ideal Christian Society, and it is open to any individual (provided he does not hold commissioned office in one particular part of the Church) to think that he will best serve the cause of Christ by belonging to no Church, or to all Churches (so far as they will allow him).

But that does not appear to me to be the business of the Union, which came into existence to advance the cause of Liberal Religious Thought *within the Church of England*. We shall

weaken our effectiveness and dissipate our efforts if we imagine that our aim is an almost creedless universal Church. That may be the final goal, but it is not practical politics. Christ will know his own in the last day, and we know that his judgment will occasion many surprises.

There is one fact which it is generally admitted that the Germans can teach us, and that is the value of corporate feeling and corporate action. The present is witnessing a reaction against the excessive individualism of the past, and particularly against the liberalism of the nineteenth century and the chaos of unlimited economic competition. Religiously this reaction will tend to strengthen those forms of religion which emphasize the corporate aspects of faith. Men are beginning to think that it is worth while sacrificing a measure of personal freedom if by so doing they gain the fellowship of a society, especially if they see within that society the hope of a happier, richer life. Protestantism in so far as it asserts the freedom of each individual is a diminishing force; Catholicism, with its emphasis upon corporate life, is proving its attractiveness to men floundering in the chaos of world ruin.

Modernism must therefore find its place in that society which, whatever its defects, does stand for the preservation of the Christian ideals and for the furthering of Christian fellowship. Our task is to co-operate with that Church in which we happen to be and to demand that it shall be as fearless in its pursuit of truth as it should be sincere in its presentation of the spirit of Christ. Modernists, we have often said, are not committed to any particular lists of 'conclusions,' and should not therefore expect the Church to impose any particular re-interpretation of traditional orthodoxy upon its members; if a man cannot understand the modernist position, or declines to accept it even if he does, we, who insist upon the comprehensiveness of the Church of England, should be the last to seek to drive him out. A Modernist should welcome the fellowship of all who are honestly facing truth and are willing to concede freedom of thought and expression to those who differ from their conclusions. A truly liberal society should include 'Catholics' and 'Evangelicals.' Liberal Catholic and Liberal Evangelical should feel at home in the Union, and I believe that the effectiveness of the Union will dwindle in the coming years unless it proves its comprehen-

siveness; while the co-operation of both catholic and evangelical elements in the preservation of religious freedom should be the best guarantee of its future.

The Union should therefore, I suggest, be more willing to co-operate with those in authority, many of whom are quite modernist in mind and outlook, but who, having the responsibility of the conduct of the Church's life in all its aspects, are more circumspect in their treatment of the weaker brethren and prefer to shepherd them along gently. We must recognize that the average layman is a long way behind modern thought, and while we want to satisfy the religious and intellectual needs of the more intelligent we have no need to drive the simple out of the Church. But we have the right to demand that those in authority should not impose upon the educated formulae and doctrines which modern scholarship shows to be untrue or doubtful. This demand for loyalty to truth must be made in the name of Christ, who is the Truth. This is the answer to the question as to the subject-matter in which we desire freedom.

The Doctrinal Report appears to me to show how far those in authority are prepared to go in their concessions to modern thought, and that is so far along the road that it would probably be sound policy to take the Report as the charter of Modernism and be content for this generation with what has been there achieved. It will be a long time before the views therein contained become the generally accepted views of the Church of England and the leavening process must be allowed time. Later generations may wish to go further, but if we can accustom the Church to the degree of liberty contained in this Report we shall have advanced the cause of religion, in this respect, as far as we can hope to do for this generation, and we may turn our energies to other aspects of religious liberty which are of no less importance, namely, re-union (or the strengthening of the corporate unity of Christendom), and religious education (or the conversion of the men and women of to-day to a form of Christianity which will give them moral and spiritual illumination without conflicting with their intelligence).

The question of re-union I must leave aside, merely remarking that it will no doubt come when the Churches are ready for it and that the Union has abundantly proved its zeal for the cause of Christian unity throughout its history.

Religious education is now entering, apparently, upon a new era, and if the developments foreshadowed materialize a great field of opportunity will open before the Union. For a nation-wide system of religious education will need an army of trained teachers; the training colleges will be called upon to supply courses of study in religious knowledge, and, by implication, in the practice of religious worship and the meaning of the Christian life. It is indeed a vision glorious. From a consideration of the present position two facts seem to stand out with regard to this religious education.

(*a*) It must be a compromise syllabus; no denomination or party can claim privileges in its compilation. The method of presentation and of dealing with questions and difficulties will obviously depend upon the individual teacher. The demand for literature on such matters will be tremendous.

(*b*) The basis of the syllabus must be 'the study of the Bible itself in the light of modern scholarship' (Canon Ottley in a letter to *The Times*, February 25, 1941). The spectacle of thousands of teachers, trained to understand the Bible in the light of modern scholarship, and given the opportunity to impart that understanding to practically the whole of the children of the country, is cause for much rejoicing, and offers a task for Modernist leaders which we hope will be seized. It presages a time when liberal religious thought will be not a minority movement but an essential characteristic of English Christianity.

There is all the more reason therefore for the Modernist movement to prove its capacity for co-operation with all shades of liberalism. Once establish religious education upon the basis of the Bible in the light of modern scholarship and we can leave the future to take care of itself. Christian liberalism will be secure.

Here perhaps, at last, is the solution of the dilemma which has beset the Union all its days—the dilemma of being the 'leaven' or the 'lump,' it has been called. The organization and methods of the Union have usually compelled it to be the leaven, a small body of intellectuals concerned in the working out of a religious faith for people of education rather than in conveying the faith so worked out to the common people. Of course there have been popularizers (was not Dick Sheppard one of our Vice-Presidents?), but nobody recognized their teaching, with its practical and sympathetic touch, as the application of Modern-

ism. The older generation of Modernists have succeeded (so at least we who follow in their steps believe) in making the ancient Christian faith acceptable in a modern world; they have worked out the main outlines of a re-interpreted Christianity in the light of modern knowledge. Thanks to them, liberal religious thought has accomplished the Doctrinal Report, which is the high-water mark of their efforts.

Has not the time come for a re-orientation of policy? The needs of the time are for a Christianity which is intelligent and practical, which not only commends itself to man's reason but will also help him to shape his life and his society so that peace and happiness may be shared by all men. The interpretation of the Christian faith in the light of modern knowledge and in its relevance to modern life are the paramount tasks of the immediate future. In what way can the Union best play its part?

We are brought, then, back to the second question which was asked at the beginning: are the existing organization and methods of the Union such as to ensure its effectiveness in the work that clamours to be done? The answer will depend, of course, upon whether the diagnosis of the present position outlined above is accepted. If that is not accepted, there is no more to be said. If it be accepted, then it would appear that the Union should definitely, in the main, commit itself to the alternative horn of the dilemma and devote its main efforts to the dissemination of the modern interpretation of Christ and the Christian faith. There is a fruitful field awaiting it.

It will mean that fresh and younger blood must be drawn into the Union, and changes in organization would appear to be inevitable, but what they are can only be determined when general agreement has been reached upon the policy which is to guide our efforts. The younger members, and those who ought to be members and are not, should be allowed a very large measure of self-expression in the discussion, for it is they who will, in the end, have to carry out the policy, and it will be their world in which its effects will be realized.

There is nothing in all this which abrogates any of the Union's aims or diverts it from its ideals, and the Modernist should be the last to entrammel the spiritual progress of the future with the out-grown traditions of the past.

SYNESIUS OF CYRENE

By the Rev. P. Gardner-Smith, B.D., Dean of Jesus College, Cambridge.

A COUPLE of years ago probably few Englishmen could have pointed to Cyrene on the map. Classical scholars may have remembered that it was the site of a seventh century Greek colony, and that in the fourth century B.C. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy, was born there; but even in Hellenistic times Cyrene had become '*urbs antiqua sed deserta*,' and since the Arab invasion Libya has had little history. Now General Wavell and the Army of the Nile have put Cyrenaica once more on the map.

Church historians may remember that even in the time of its decay Cyrene produced one famous man, Synesius, who was born about 375 A.D., and who became one of the most interesting figures in the history of the early fifth century. He was a man of good family, tracing back his descent to Eurysthenes, who led the Dorians into Sparta, and still further back to Hercules. In spite of bad times he was fairly well-to-do, and from his father he inherited not only an estate, but also a library and a strong taste for literary culture. For himself he acquired a passion for writing elegant letters, and it is from these letters that we gather all that we know about the facts of his life.

Synesius was about 18 when he sailed to Alexandria and became a student at the University. It was then the chief centre of Hellenic culture, and although we have no account of his experiences, we may be sure that Alexandria was to Synesius all that a modern university is to the keen young scholar of to-day. There was the great library, packed with the treasures of antiquity, there were the acknowledged exponents of philosophy and science, and there was the famous Hypatia. This remarkable woman was the pride and glory of the philosophical schools, and her lectures were crowded by enthusiastic admirers. What she taught we do not know; probably mathematics and astronomy, and probably the Neo-Platonic philosophy: at least she won the respectful veneration of the young Cyrenean, and

we may be thankful that he never knew the dreadful fate which overtook her when in 415 she was torn in pieces by the savage mob.

From Alexandria Synesius went to Athens, not because Athens had anything to teach that Alexandria had not, but as a concession to the snobbery of the age.

> 'I shall get one advantage,' he said, 'from going there; I shall no longer have to look with reverence on those persons who have no advantage over us in knowledge of Plato or Aristotle, and yet, because they have seen the Academy and the Lycaeum, treat us as if they were demi-gods and we demi-asses.'

But he did not greatly profit by his residence.

> 'Athens,' he writes, 'has no longer anything sublime except the country's famous names. Aforetime it was the dwelling-place of the wise; to-day the beekeepers alone bring it honour.'

On his way home he suffered shipwreck, an experience of which he has left a thrilling account in a letter to his brother.

> 'Our skipper was ready for death, owing to his bankrupt condition, and beside him we had twelve sailors, thirteen in all! More than half of them, including the skipper, were Jews — a graceless race and fully convinced of the piety of sending to Hades as many Greeks as possible. The rest were a collection of peasants who as late as last year had never gripped an oar; but they were all alike in this, that every man had some personal defect. So they accosted their comrades, not by their real names, but by the distinguishing marks of their misfortunes, calling out, Hi, you with the game leg! or, Here, you with the goggle eye! — to us no small source of amusement. We embarked to the number of fifty, about a third women, most of them young and comely. But do not be too quick to envy us, for a screen separated us from them, and a stout one at that, the suspended fragment of a torn sail.'

Synesius escaped the shipwreck, and, returned to his home, he was soon required to employ his talents in the service of his country. The Pentapolis was in a wretched state. The population was falling, locusts and earthquakes had impoverished the Province, and the shameless rapacity of the rulers had reduced the inhabitants to despair. Worst of all, the continual inroads of barbarians from the desert made life precarious and property insecure. The Senate of Cyrene decided to send a deputation to the Emperor protesting against his neglect and appealing for adequate military protection and remission of excessive taxation. Synesius was chosen as their envoy, and about 397 he sailed for Constantinople.

He was not fortunate in his experiences. The Emperor of the East was Arcadius, the feeble son of Theodosius the Great,

of whom Gibbon remarks that it is impossible to delineate his character since he is never recorded to have done anything at all. The government was in the hands of the eunuch Eutropius, one of the worst of the venal favourites who played the tyrant in the Emperor's name. It was no light task to gain a hearing, and for three years Synesius besieged the palace gates. 'Would that I had never seen three years of my life so wasted!' he exclaims in a later work. He was admitted to the august presence at last, and he delivered to Arcadius one of the most remarkable orations on the duties of princes that ever assailed the ears of a reigning monarch.[1] If it did not move Arcadius to anger, it must surely have sent him to sleep. Synesius speaks to the Emperor with respect, but with astonishing frankness. His manner of life is wrong. He shuts himself up in the palace, where he learns nothing of the world and sees nothing of his subjects. Instead, he becomes a prey to venal favourites,

> 'men with small heads and petty minds whom Nature by some error stamps amiss, as dishonest bankers falsify coins. A dullard becomes a gift for a king, and the duller he be, the greater the gift. These men aid you in destroying your leisure, and encourage that foggy blindness of mind which you have contracted from living a life not in accordance with nature.'

Different indeed was the programme Synesius sketched for Arcadius. Let him become a soldier. Let him inspect his troops, their arms, their horses. He should know many of his soldiers by name and share their hardships. Now the very men who fight for him know him only by portraits, and good men have to wait for years before they can obtain an audience.

> 'Are you any better off since you began all this, keeping your lair like a lizard, and scarcely peeping out to enjoy the sun, lest, being man, you should be detected as such by men? Better surely the days when the emperors lived like men in the throng, blackened by the sun, when they led armies into battle and bore themselves simply and artlessly.'

There is a great deal of good sense in the *De Regno*, however Synesius may have spoilt it by his prolixity. He is particularly insistent on the folly of relying on the barbarians to defend the Empire.

[1] It is not impossible that the oration as we have it was composed after the event and represents what Synesius would have liked to have said. It would have taken quite two hours to deliver.

'At present all men are standing on the edge of a razor. The shepherd must not mix wolves with his dogs, nor must the legislator give arms to those not born and brought up under his laws, for he has no guarantee of their good conduct. Not to organize a force to cope with these men, and to grant immunity from military service to many who ask for it, as if the barbarian army were our own native population, what is this but the act of men hastening to their doom? Rather than allow "Scythians" to bear arms we ought to seek from agriculture so dear to them the men who would fight to defend it, to summon the philosopher from his study, the craftsman from his lowlier calling, the salesman from his shop. Is it not disgraceful that an empire so rich in men should yield the crown of glory in war to aliens? Before it is too late let us recover our courage as Romans and win our victories for ourselves.'

This was ten years before the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths.

The mission of Synesius was not wholly unsuccessful, and he obtained some concessions; but on his return he found Cyrene in a sorry plight. The Province was overrun by barbarians, and although they could easily have been driven out by regular troops, the soldiers were ill-led and cowardly, and nothing was done. Synesius was not the man to be content with idle lamentations, or to await the action of the government.

'How now? Shall we watch these foul fiends braving death so readily for the sake of others' property? And shall we be sparing of ourselves, clinging to our lives when the question is one of defending our country, our laws, and our property? For my part, such as I am, I must go against these barbarians, for a camel with the mange can shoulder the burden of many asses. I see that those who do not think of anything but of saving their lives generally succumb, whereas those who are ready to make the sacrifice generally escape danger. I shall be one of these.'

So he set to work to enlist and drill a 'Home Guard.' His material was not all of the best, and he had many difficulties, but his militia was good enough to drive out the barbarians, and for a time peace was restored to Cyrene. Synesius seems to have enjoyed his military experiences, for he gives an amusing account of his activities:

'It seems to me that everyone should be thankful to war, for it is an exact touchstone of the blood in the heart of each one of us. It takes away many boasters, and returns them to us more temperate men. In future I think we shall no longer see John the Phrygian, a captain of horse, swaggering about the public square, hustling and kicking men of more peaceful disposition.

For some days we had been warned of the approach of the enemy. I decided that we should march out to meet them, so every day we

sallied forth and waited in the plain. But where was John? He was nowhere to be seen, but reports kept coming in that he had broken his leg, or was suffering from asthma, and those who brought the rumours spoke with tears in their eyes of his disappointment at being out of the fighting.

For five days we awaited the enemy in vain and had concluded that he was in retreat, when lo and behold! John appeared. Ill? Not a bit of it! He was as fit as a fiddle but had been on a long journey, whither I know not. Other districts had been in danger, and had besought John to terrify the invaders by the majesty of his presence. Having tranquilised everything he rushed back to Cyrene; perhaps the barbarians, unaware of his presence, might yet appear.

Suddenly in the gathering dark we saw three or four peasants fleeing in terror pursued by barbarians. A few moments later we saw some wretched creatures on horseback, men who, to judge from the look of them, had been pushed into battle by starvation. They jumped from their horses to give battle on foot, as their manner is. I was of opinion that we should do the same, for the ground was too rough for cavalry manoeuvres. But our friend said *he* would not renounce the noble art of horsemanship, and insisted on delivering a cavalry charge. What then? He pulls his horse's head sharply to one side, turns and flees at full gallop. We found him afterwards at Bombaea, hidden in a cave like a mouse in a hole.'

Peace restored, Synesius settled down to enjoy the country life that he loved so well. He became a country squire of a type familiar in England before Mr. Lloyd George began his campaign against rural tyranny and dissolved Merrie England in an acid bath of Welsh radicalism. 'Books and beasts' were his occupations, and it is evident from his letters that he was thoroughly happy. Philosophy was still his main interest, and he often wrote to Hypatia concerning his studies; but however he might pretend to crave for a life of pure contemplation, he evidently enjoyed the simple pleasures of the country. Writing to his brother, he invited him to come and share his retreat:

'Come to us, where you may recover your health. At Phycus you can only lie on the sand, but here you can go under the shade of a tree, or wander from grove to grove. You can step across a rivulet. How delightful is the zephyr which gently stirs the branches! There are the varied notes of the birds, the colours of the flowers, the shrubs in the meadows. Side by side are the works of man and the free gifts of nature. All things are fragrant with perfume, the sweet aromas of a healthy soil.'

In another letter to his friend Olypius he chats about the country and the peasants. They were simple folk, poor company for a philosopher: but Synesius had a good man's love for honest rustics, and though he might laugh at them, he laughed with them too. Even his slaves, he tells us, regarded him more as a

chosen ruler than as a despot imposed on them by law. Lonely perhaps he was, but there were compensations:

> 'We are awakened, not by the sea, but by the neighing of horses, the bleating of goats, the cry of the sheep, or the bellowing of a bull; then at the first ray of sunshine we hear the humming of bees — the loveliest of all music! We live far from the town, far from the highways, far from commerce and its wily morality. For us there is time for philosophy, but no time to do evil. We are all comrades, for we depend on one another. It is hard work, and there is no room for the idler. Our food is bread and fruit, all grown in the country, with the flavour of the best soil still clinging to it. The bees give us honey, the goats give us milk. Then of course hunting helps the table. To think that Homer should not have sung hunting as a glory to man and ennobling to those who pursue it, when he has eulogised the forum, that makes men shameless and utterly vile!
>
> We have our music too. The peasants play upon a little shepherd's lyre, a simple thing they make themselves, sweet-toned and masculine in its note. It is not supple, nor can it be adapted to every note, but the singers accommodate themselves to the simplicity of the instrument, and they do not attempt sentimental subjects. We sing in praise of the vigorous ram, or the dog who has lost his tail, of the hunter who brings peace to our pastures and meat to our table, of the fig-tree and the vine. Such are our celebrations, seasonable and traditional, the good things of the poor. As to the Emperor and his court, no one ever mentions them here. We know there is an emperor, for we are reminded every year by the tax-collector; but who he is is not very clear. Some think Agamemnon is still king, and we love to hear about a friend of his called Odysseus, a clever fellow with a bald head, always getting out of difficulties. The herdmen roar with laughter when they tell the story of the Cyclops, and think that Odysseus blinded him only the other day.'

But Synesius was not to spend the rest of his days on his farm. He had made enemies by his exposure of the incompetence of the authorities, and they continued to annoy him. So in two or three years we find him back at Alexandria, glad to escape from the petty spite of his neighbours. There several things happened which profoundly affected his life. He renewed and strengthened his friendship with Hypatia; he married a wife; and he made the acquaintance of Theophilus, the Bishop. We know little about his wife, not even her name; but Synesius seems to have been deeply devoted to her, and the fact that she was a Christian certainly helped to bring about his own conversion. As to Theophilus, the uncle of Cyril appears in Church History in anything but a favourable light as the relentless and unscrupulous opponent of St. Chrysostom, and Gibbon calls him 'that bold, bad, man whose hands were alternately polluted with

gold and blood'; but he was a man of learning, presumably there was a better side to his character, and Synesius discovered that. He liked and reverenced the bishop, and it was Theophilus who married him.

Returning to Cyrene in 405, Synesius found things worse than ever. Cerealius, the Governor of the Pentapolis, was just the kind of man who brought the tottering Empire to its fall. His one idea of government was extortion, and he used the soldiers, not to defeat the barbarians, but to oppress his subjects. The barbarians grew more daring and actually laid siege to Cyrene. Cerealius seized what property he could, advised the Cyrenians not to fight, and put to sea. Once more Synesius saved the situation. He reformed his militia, defeated the enemy, and relieved the city. He had some welcome support from the Christian clergy:

> 'May all good things befall the priests of Axomis! While the soldiers were hiding in the gorges of the mountains to take care of their precious lives, these priests called the peasants about them, and led them straight from the Church doors against the enemy. The barbarians, expecting no opposition, entered a dangerous defile. Faustus, a valiant deacon, marching at the head of his troops, picked up a stone; he did not hurl it, but holding it in his hand, he leapt upon a hoplite, and struck him violently on the temple. Knocking him down, he stripped him of his armour, and then heaped many more barbarians upon him. If any other man gave proof of courage in that battle, it is to Faustus that the credit is due.'

For four or five years Synesius stayed at home, reading, writing, hunting, fighting, and three sons were born to him. Then they made him a bishop. It was an astonishing choice, how astonishing we shall realize if we glance at his religion. By education he was a Neo-Platonist, of which philosophy the main elements have been summed up as follows:

> 'A dualistic opposition of the divine and the earthly. An abstract conception of God, excluding all knowledge of the divine nature. Contempt for the world of sense. The theory of intermediate potencies or beings through whom God acts upon the world of phenomena. The need of ascetic self-emancipation from the bondage of sense; and faith in a higher revelation to man when in a state called enthusiasm.'

Perhaps at heart Synesius was not a very good Neo-Platonist, but at the most he had a vague and misty religion without a definite creed. The invitation to accept the bishopric took him by surprise. It is clear enough why the people wanted him. The

days were not suitable in Cyrene for a very close scrutiny of theological opinions, and indeed most of the people were wholly innocent of theology; but they must have a leader, and who better than Synesius, if he would accept an office which would clothe him with spiritual power? They could not trust the government, and by themselves they were helpless against the rapacious governors and the fierce barbarians. The Church was their only refuge, but they must have the right man to lead them.

Synesius had scruples, and in a letter to his brother he reveals his state of mind. He was not blind to the compliment paid him by the Cyrenians in offering him an honour to which he would never have dared to aspire. But was he fitted to accept such an office? Dare he win honour from men at the price of sinning against God? Were his habits and his views compatible with the calling of a bishop?

> 'All my days are divided between study and recreation. In my hours of work, above all when I am occupied in divine matters, I withdraw into myself. In my leisure hours I give myself to my friends. For you know that when I look up from my books I like to enjoy every kind of sport. But the priest should be a man above human weaknesses. He should be a stranger to every sort of diversion, even as God Himself. All eyes are keeping watch on him to see that he justifies his mission. He is of little or no use unless he has made himself austere and unyielding towards any pleasure. Besides, he has as many calls upon him as all the rest of the world put together, for the affairs of all are his business. How can he keep the divine flame alive when such varied duties claim him on every side?
>
> I have another thing to say, knowing that you will not be by any means the only one to read this letter. God Himself, the law of the land, and the blessed hand of Theophilus have given me a wife. I therefore proclaim to all and call them to witness once and for all, that I will not be separated from her, nor will I associate with her surreptitiously like an adulterer. I shall desire and pray to have many virtuous children.'

Synesius made other stipulations:

> 'Philosophy rejects many of those convictions which are cherished by the common people. I can never persuade myself that the soul is of more recent origin than the body. Never would I admit that the world and its components must perish. The resurrection which is an object of common belief is nothing for me but a sacred and mysterious allegory, and I am far from sharing the views of the crowd thereon.
>
> If the laws of the priesthood permit these views to me, I may take over the holy office on condition that I may prosecute philosophy at home, so that if I teach no doctrine, at all events I undo no teaching, and allow men to remain in their acquired convictions. After all, what can there be in common between the man in the street and philosophy?

> Divine truth should remain hidden, but the vulgar need a different system. A wise man should not force his opinions upon others, nor allow others to force theirs upon him.
>
> No! If I am called to the priesthood, I declare before God and man that I refuse to preach dogmas that I do not believe. Truth is an attribute of God, and I wish to be blameless before Him. I will have no humbug about my profession.'

In other respects Synesius was prepared for sacrifice:

> 'I have a good deal of inclination for amusements. Even as a child I was charged with a mania for arms and horses. Greatly shall I suffer at seeing my darling hounds deprived of their hunting, and my bow moth-eaten. Yet I will resign myself to this if it be the will of God. Again, I hate care. Yet I will endure lawsuits and quarrels so long as I can fulfil my mission; but never will I consent to conceal my opinions or allow my beliefs to be at war with my tongue. I do not wish to give anyone the opportunity of saying that I, an unknown man, grasped at the appointment. Let Theophilus, the beloved of God, decide.'

Theophilus decided, and Synesius was ordained and consecrated, but we may well marvel that such a man was accepted on such terms. When we consider how violent were the doctrinal controversies of the age, how ready were bishops, not least Theophilus and his successors, to hound one another to death rather than agree to differ on the mysteries of the faith, we may feel astonishment that no protest was made at the elevation of Synesius. Perhaps personal friendship counted for something; perhaps Theophilus saw that Synesius was indeed the man required; but perhaps also we may infer that behind the bitter theological controversies of the age lay personal animosities and the mutual jealousies of the great sees. The theology of the Bishop of Ptolemais did not matter much so long as he did not challenge the supremacy of Alexandria, and the friend and pupil of Theophilus was not likely to do that.

The choice of the people was soon justified. Just about the time that Synesius became Bishop, the governorship of the Pentapolis passed into the hands of one Andronicus, a man who helps us to realize how bad Roman provincial government could be. He owed his position to bribery, and his character seems to have had no redeeming feature. His one concern was to wring money from his unhappy subjects, and his talents were chiefly employed in devising new and diabolical forms of torture. Synesius calls him the deadliest plague of the Pentapolis, worse than earthquakes, locusts, pestilence, fire and war. The only

hope of the people lay in their Bishop, for even the Governor was nominally a Christian, and ecclesiastical discipline was not to be ignored. Synesius did not fail his flock. Andronicus seized a well-to-do citizen of whose marriage he disapproved, and proceeded to torture him to death. He swore that the Church should not interfere: 'My enemies shall not escape, though they cling to the very feet of Christ.' Synesius summoned a synod and pronounced an oration against the Governor:

> 'Andronicus of Berenice let no man call a Christian, but rather, as accursed of God, let him be turned out of every church.'

The Governor capitulated, and Synesius was persuaded to suspend the sentence. But the penitence of Andronicus was short-lived; fresh crimes and murders stained his rule, and the sentence was dispatched to all the churches:

> 'I exhort every private individual and ruler not to be under the same roof with them, not to be seated at the same table, for they shall neither speak to them while living nor bury them when dead.'

Andronicus was boycotted, powerless, ruined; no one would give him shelter or supply him with the necessities of life; and so complete was his downfall that Synesius himself was moved to pity by his wretched state. Thus he wrote to Theophilus:

> 'The Church detested this man on account of his crimes, but now she who had urged on his fall has taken pity on him, for he has exceeded the measure of his malediction. If your sacred person judges that this unhappy man is worthy of any interest, I shall regard it as a signal proof that God has not yet abandoned him.'

Astonishing indeed is the power of the Church thus illustrated. Not a hundred years had passed since Constantine's Edict of Milan stopped the last persecution, and here is a remote Bishop able to humble and ruin the Governor of a Roman Province.

There is no need to dwell on the rest of the story, which mostly concerns the renewal of the barbarian attacks. The Province was weaker, and the invaders were stronger. Before long they were besieging Ptolemais itself, and Synesius gave way to despair. He had reason, for although the feeble forces of the Empire rallied and the siege was raised, the Pentapolis never recovered, and Cyrene virtually passes out of history. His children died, his country was a desert, and Synesius was not sorry to depart:

> 'Would that I might either cease to live, or else forget the tombs of my children.'

His wish was granted, and he died a few months before the murder of Hypatia to whom he had written these words.

Synesius deserves our affectionate remembrance, not least in times like these when we too have barbarians thundering at the gates. He represents a type of piety, strong, virile, and non-ascetic, which was rare indeed in the fifth century, but to which the Church, particularly in England, has owed much. He furnished a living proof that dogmatic orthodoxy may be less important than certain other qualities too lightly regarded in the Church of his time and too often neglected in the Church of all ages. Above all, he did not let his religion rob him of his common sense, and he saw that if a civilization is to be preserved it must be defended.[2]

RELIGION TO THE RESCUE: WHICH?

By the Rev. Canon R. D. Richardson, M.A., B.Litt.

NO doubt a great many people saw, and were perhaps cheered by, the New Year number of *Picture Post*, which was devoted to working out 'A Plan for Britain.' The plan concerned itself with more than improving material conditions and reducing the amount of work men ought to do. It had ideas for improving education and for the spending of time in the right way when work is done. But two things in it interested me, as a Churchman, most--one a picture and the other a sentence. The picture was an imaginary cross-section of a reconstructed Britain; and it contained a church. So the Church was to be given a place in the prospective new civilization. The sentence was written underneath the picture and described it thus: 'The Church, in its garden setting, regains the dignity it had five centuries ago.'

That set me thinking on the nature and dignity of the Church; and also recalling what the Christian Church was like

[2] For quotations see *The Letters of Synesius of Cyrene*. Translation, Introduction and Notes, by Augustine Fitzgerald. O.U.P., 1926. Fitzgerald gives an adequate bibliography. Mention may be made of Miss Alice Gardner's *Life of Synesius*, published by the S.P.C.K. Some of his hymns are included. 'Lord Jesus, think on me' is the best known.

in England five centuries ago, in the time between the battle of Agincourt and the rise of the Tudor monarchy—a period as far from being glorious in either Church or State as any other in our history. The Wars of the Roses began in 1450. In the words of John Richard Green,

> 'The violence and anarchy, which had always clung like a taint to the Baronage, had received a new impulse from the war with France. . . . In the presence of Lollardy and Socialism the Church had ceased to be a great political power and had sunk into a mere section of the landed aristocracy. . . . All spiritual life seemed to have been trodden out in the ruin of the Lollards. . . . The one belief of the time was in sorcery and magic.'

Some may think this picture too black, but modification cannot remove the irony that the truth lends to the sentence, 'The Church, in its garden setting, regains the dignity it had five centuries ago.'

Five centuries ago, when the loveliest of our churches were being built, and being built profusely in garden settings, the Church itself had little dignity. But it was undergoing a fundamental change. The spiritual guidance of mankind was passing fast from clergy to laity; to writers, romancers, singers, players, disputants, pamphleteers. Had not the Church taken account of these new voices and reformed itself officially, its lovely buildings would at length have been but hollow shells, awakening memories only of a dignity and authority outworn. But the authorities began to listen. And in England, a hundred years later, the official Church revised its doctrines, and put forth new forms of worship which were not only beautiful but true according to the learning of the times. The Church fitted itself to be the home of free men, training them in knowledge and in reverence alike. And in this atmosphere the Elizabethan era dawned, a golden age in English politics, literature and adventure.

Is not the situation similar to-day? And is it much use to restore our churches or rebuild them, and plant them in garden settings, unless all this outward dignity stand for something real; unless the Church recover its spiritual leadership? I wondered if *Picture Post* and the great circle of readers which it represents had missed this point; or what might be their deeper thought about it. But no: it was raised in the companion magazine, *World Review*, in the January number of which was an article

called 'Religion to the Rescue.' Significantly this was by a writer, a disputant, a professor — but one who is not a Christian. 'What we need,' Professor Joad (of the school which includes also Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard) had written,

> 'is a development of the spirit commensurate with the development of our power.'
>
> 'Particularly intolerable is the absence of creed and code . . . in which educated men can believe. . . .'
>
> 'The Stage is thus set for a religious revival.'
>
> 'In face of the approaching collapse of their civilzation, men of intelligence and good will must form communities in which they can keep alive something of the old culture, and practise themselves in those new disciplines which are a necessary condition of the coming of the new.'

The essence of the new creed is described as belief in 'a spiritual reality underlying and uniting all apparently separate existents,' a reality which is also 'our own inmost essence.' The essence of the discipline is to 'merge' ourselves in this reality, thereby to 'enlarge our consciousness' and draw to ourselves 'moral and even physical powers which by ordinary standards can only be described as supernormal.' And the final result of holding the creed and practising the discipline is promised as 'direct insight into the nature of reality. Also, incidentally we shall be freed from the spur of sexual desire, lose the capacity for feeling pain, and achieve a non-violent sanction for all human relationships.'

This then is the theme of a representative voice from the writers, romancers, players and disputants of to-day. Is it incompatible with Christianity? Christians, too, believe that the real can be known and that communion therewith enlarges the spiritual consciousness, quickens the moral perceptions, enhances the physical powers, increases the capacity to deal with temptation and pain and creates the right spirit in human relationships. Two questions therefore arise. Why the demand for a new, non-Christian religion? And is the new Faith sufficient to effect our rescue? The following are some considerations on the second question.

(1) The new Faith described in the above quotations seems to set no value for the spiritual life either on sense-stimulations or on historical happenings. For this reason it cuts the nexus between body and soul. We are, for example, to 'be freed from

sexual desire and the capacity for feeling pain.' Ought this to happen, and can it happen? Surely that religion is most fruitful and firmly grounded in fact which holds that the body contributes to the growth of the soul and that the soul should regulate, but not dismiss, the body. And as a continuation of this, is it not true (since reality is admitted to be the 'inmost essence' of us, historical persons) that there is a significance in history? If we can draw from the spiritual reality 'moral and even physical powers' and effect a difference in 'human relationships,' then a significance must be seen in those who have done so and in the movements which they have effected in history. The pattern of reality has been made clearer by them. Christians see this pattern clearest in the Incarnation. The historical element in religion must of course be subject to historical criticism, but this does not demand the elimination of it all. And is not religion without it—and without recognition of the interrelation of soul and body—elusive and doctrinnaire?

(2) Although the writer in *World Review* says much about a purposive creative activity in the universe, he thinks of that purpose as so thwarted now by war and barbarism that it must needs take refuge, away from the great stream of human life and present events, in souls who will enlarge their consciousness by disciplines practised in seclusion. But this development of the spirit is not likely to be achieved by reverting to an ancient pattern of community, one cast in the monastic mould. What the soul can achieve in such solitudes we have known for generations—Christianity itself still usefully admits a monastic element—but the method does not suggest itself as the likely starting point for a new and universal spiritual advance. It might represent a *recul pour mieux sauter* should civilization collapse completely and if Totalitarian States would permit it; but if victory favours Britain in face of all the odds, will it not be a fair conclusion that the main line of evolution is running through the type that has not withdrawn in philosophic contemplation and religious fatalism (like the present leaders of the French as well as the devotees of the new Faith), but has organized itself as a democracy braced with faith to every endeavour for the sake of a realizable ideal achieved amid and through the daily round and common task? If then the new Faith is to be

of the mystical variety, it must yet be a type of mysticism congruous with this setting. Is there such a type? And is such not Christian mysticism?

(3) Can this new Faith which is purely mystical ever be more than the religion of a few? And is it the only way to the enlargement of the spiritual consciousness of the race? Can that indeed be a true way which is practised in 'profound pessimism about . . . applied science, and social reform, and human nature as it is in the average man or woman'? Although both creed and method, as they are described in the quotations I have given, are not incompatible with Christianity, the acknowledged tendency to pessimism and to distrust of broad humanity and things human suggests rather affinity with Oriental mysticism. Its devotees are strongly subject to the tendency to fling away the golden ladder between earth and heaven and to fly straight to reality without the aid of symbols. This is indeed the tendency of all mysticism, and it needs to be corrected by an acknowledgment that mysticism is one element only in religion. Presented as religion's self, it will not embrace the whole of reality; and the generality of mankind will turn away from it with shuddering, as from the charnel house. Therefore it must encourage irreligion in the many and a dualistic division of society, with the spiritual power-house and the mechanical power-house of humanity set off against each other. Is this what is meant by 'a development of the spirit commensurate with the development of our power'? Can that religion be the best which does not lead straight to the sanctification of the whole of life and by which one only type of soul can mount to heaven? The Christian religion on the other hand has a place for the mystic, but also for the sacramentalist and for him who forgets himself in doing good. It includes the technique whereby the eye turns inward, the technique which trains the soul through the ordered progress of religious rites, and the technique which consists in the daily duty set us from the command of Christ and not self-chosen. Surely the religion of humanity is likely to be that in which the less is included in the greater.

Why then — to turn now to the first main question — is there this demand for a new, non-Christian religion? The answer is

that official Christianity is not yet as near as possible to the true thing. The Church is not recognizable as finding its whole life in the message and person of Jesus Christ—of Jesus Christ Himself. Such essential Christianity the world has not yet fully seen, except in the lives of saints. Yet the existence and the inspiration of the Church lies in this one vocation of Christ's disciples to show Him forth and work out the implications of His way of life, to be steadfast in its hold on the reality whose nature He disclosed and on the sacraments which link earth to heaven. Real Christianity, because it is the religion both of Incarnation and Redemption, hallows all our life and makes it dedicate to God; it blesses our family ties, and strengthens our souls at their departing; above all, it constantly renews and transforms our every action, and it is centred in memories of the life and love of a historical Person, in memories of His suffering and triumph. And all this it is the function of the Church to set forth and to mark with its ministry, so as to teach it and make it available for every man, woman and child who comes within its system. Its creeds are intended as signposts to the nature of reality. Its worship is practised with techniques whereby souls are released from the restraints of effort and of solitude and plunged into the rich life-currents of a great tradition. In the performance of the symbolic acts of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Prayer and Eucharist—which are not only symbols but effectual, grace-evoking sacraments—it is the Church's task to nurture souls and educate the moral and the intellectual powers. In private and in public life the Church should lead men unerringly to God. To some extent it does accomplish this. Yet how little is the actual compared with the possible.

The reason for the failure is that the official Church does not represent Christ unmistakably to those who are not its own children. Its ideal is acknowledged, but there is a gap in its practice, and a gap *which could be bridged*. That is the point. Strange that the authorities will not acknowledge this, when even the lowliest Christian would acknowledge it of his own practice and seek thereby to win his brother. So in our own day the Church has once again but little dignity. In the irreverent words of the authors of that racy history, *The Long Week-end* (*i.e.* 1918-1939), 'There is a feeling abroad that the Church has

fallen into the hands of phrase-mongers and dead-heads.' The Church has become almost synonymous with the Clergy. Its buildings are fast becoming shells which enshrine but the memory of a creed. The modern writers, romancers, singers, players, disputants and pamphleteers deplore 'the absence of a creed and code in which educated men can believe' and without which young people cannot 'canalize their aspirations or . . . guide their conduct,' and they strive in their desperation to set forth a new and credible religion. And to all this we have been tending for quite eighty years. In the end, the authorities will have to listen, for Christianity is a religion which will take the bit between its teeth and run away with the fetters of ecclesiasticism that would hamper it. If not the clergy, then the laity will do this, for the voice of true Christianity sounds clear in our ears still.

Yet perhaps after all the official Church is listening, and by the time a hundred years are gone it will have changed its attitude to many things, revised its doctrines once again, and put forth new forms of worship not only beautiful but true according to the learning of our times. There are already signs — and wonders. Religious education in the schools on an undenominational basis is suggested by the Archbishops. *The Times* publishes letters asking that the so-called Apostles' Creed be replaced by a clear and compendious statement of the Christian Faith. Conferences, as at Malvern, work very hard for a more Christian structure of society. The official Church, in fact, is working very hard indeed. Perhaps too hard. What are needed most are a little simplicity and a greater measure of ordinary truthfulness, not to say real orthodoxy. Few of the noisy defenders of Christian orthodoxy give signs of knowing what it is.

The present time presents great opportunity for making the Church once again the Church of the whole English nation. Our newspapers and periodicals, with their plans for Britain, are summoning us to courage, hope and resolve. Our intellectuals are crying for a Faith in which they can believe. Our defenders in battle, hallowed by their kinship with the Man of Calvary, bring us an echo of the prophet's words, 'Behold, I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth.' A religious revival has indeed already begun in the souls of ordinary Englishmen. In

the stress of dark times, our national character has shone out again with all its traditional heroism, its broad sympathy and cheerfulness. At a crucial moment in our history, we are being endowed again with power from on High. But this religious revival — for it is one — has so far only touched us; and it has taken place outside the Church. The Church must be in sympathy with it, instead of repeating the conventional shibboleths about the war being a doom upon us for our sins. It is not a doom; but simply another proof of the fact that God rules by laws, not saving us from the natural consequences of our acts but allowing our actions to bring about their inevitable consequences; blindness as the result of laziness about truth; sluggishness as the result of slackening attention; social discontent as the result of setting our hearts on the wrong values. But because in none of these things had we definitely aimed at evil, or nourished hatred and malice, we have recovered in time; and, our eyes once having been enlightened, we are setting out with single-minded desire to make a new and better world. If the official Church will only listen, and also heed to the full the voices — voices from God — which are now being borne to her upon so many winds, and so recapture her spiritual leadership, then the religious revival which has touched the souls of Englishmen to-day would spread to their whole man, and all those things which I have enumerated as the functions of a true Church in the world would be accomplished.

The Church is central; it touches life at every point; we cannot do without it. But it needs to be reformed, and its pattern brought closer, officially, to essential Christianity. If that were done, I do not doubt that men would again flock into it. I do not doubt that it would look like the setter forth of the new religion that some men seek. I do not doubt that it would recover the only dignity that matters.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FALL OF THE IDOLS*

The Fall of the Idols is one of the signs of these times. From the treasury of his wide learning and of long experience and memory, Dr. Inge brings wisdom new and old. With a shrewd and penetrating insight he surveys the present age and those which gave it birth. He weighs in the balance its successes and more hopeful prospects against its more serious backslidings and reversions, and though he finds many things ominous he does not despair at least of Humanism and Religion. The book is garnished by a wealth of happy quotations from Classical and other writers, and seasoned by many telling and piquant sentences of the author.

Dr. Inge sees the nineteenth-century idols of Progress, Democracy and Economism shattered or tottering. He examines the difficulties involved in the concept of Progress from the standpoints of philosophy, science and religion. Empirically, Dr. Inge thinks, there was never very strong evidence for belief in inevitable or uniform progress or progress as a universal law, and that the events of the last thirty years have dealt it a mortal wound. In philosophy Dr. Inge urges that the concept of progress has never really been at home, and Entropy or the Second Law of Thermodynamics, of the implications of which there is an interesting discussion (p. 39 ff.), has made it difficult in physics. For himself he says:

> 'I must confess that I hanker after the old theory of cosmic cycles. It seems to me that if time is the moving image of eternity, the time-form of eternity is perpetuity. All Platonists must wish that this may be the truth. Whittaker even says that if entropy were established as an universal law, the whole scheme of the later Platonists would be upset. I doubt whether this necessarily follows, but certainly an infinite series of finite purposes, each with its beginning, middle, and end, is more consonant with this philosophy than the irrevocable doom which is accepted so complacently by Jeans and Eddington' (p. 44).

True to his Platonism, Dr. Inge concludes the chapter with these words:

> 'The only escape from this cyclic rhythm is to set our affections on the absolute unchanging values in which the nature and will of God are revealed to us. No imagined temporal felicity can satisfy us, since that also must change and pass. But nothing that truly *is* can ever perish; it belongs to the eternal order. "The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished"' (p. 85).

While we might regret the fall of some types of the idol of Progress, we could not but rejoice at the fall of Economism. 'By Economism' Dr.

* *The Fall of the Idols*. By W. R. Inge, formerly Dean of St. Paul's. (Putnam. Price 8/6. Publication date: November 15th, 1940.)

Inge means

> 'the theory that economic questions, relating to the acquisition, production and consumption of wealth, are the most important problems of social life, dwarfing all others into insignificance' (p. 139).

In this interesting chapter Dr. Inge pays to the young, of whom he has some hard things to say in the book (v. p. 17), the highest tribute he possibly could. He says that 'private acquisitiveness and materialism are no longer dominant ideas with the young' (p. 167). If that be true and the young have opportunity and power to rebuild, there is indeed hope for the future. The following words, which might serve as a guide to such young men freed from Economism, bring the chapter to its close:

> 'But the spiritual capital of a nation consists in its beliefs, hopes, interests, and affections. Its spiritual income is the use made of these . . . The only way to increase the real public wealth is by the creation of new values. Religion, high character, and culture enhance and create values everywhere. Selfishness and hatred, envy and discontent destroy values to an enormous extent for those who indulge them. They cannot enjoy what they have, and they poison the air around them. The maxim that love is the fulfilling of the law is sound economics as well as sound morality. Sowers of hatred are the worst public enemies' (p. 170).

In the chapter on Humanism this line of thought is continued. Dr. Inge examines what Humanism has meant to various thinkers, and briefly traces its origins in Hellenism and Christianity.

> 'Man is a queer animal, for he is capable of martyrdom. It is not enough to supply all his material wants. He needs an ideal to live for, an ideal for which if necessary he is willing to die. This means that there are absolute values, and that neither life nor pleasure is one of them. There is a world of eternal spiritual realities in which and for which we are living. When this is once admitted, all political and economic values are seen to be only relative and subsidiary' (pp. 235-236).

> 'This recognition of objective values is part of the humanist tradition as it comes down from Plato. When we speak of the failure of humanism we do not mean, or ought not to mean, that the ideal of humanism is wrong, even if we believe that it needs to be supplemented by the Christian law of love. It has failed, as Christianity may be said to have failed, because in our generation men have forgotten it or do not try to live up to it' (p. 236).

Of Judaism and Christianity he goes on to say:

> 'Perhaps the chief contribution of Judaism was the desire and expectation that God's justice may be established on earth. Even Plato says, "Human affairs are not worth serious attention. The worst of it is that we are obliged to take them seriously." . . . But the greatest contribution of Christianity to Hellenistic religion is one which comes from the Founder Himself rather than from His nation — the law of love. The Platonists realized that love is the chief hierophant of the divine mysteries; the spirit in love sees the beatific vision. But love to man, as the sacrament and necessary manifestation

of love to God — this doctrine, so closely connected with the Incarnation, gives warmth, fire, and colour to the somewhat cold "scale of perfection" mapped out for us by the Greek philosophers. It sweeps away that last infirmity of noble minds, the wish to be invulnerable, the promise of other religions and philosophies; for love often hurts. Remembering this, we may add that humanism is "not enough." But let us not disparage it; it may make us civilised, which most of us are not at present' (pp. 245-6).

In the final section on Religion the function of the clergy is described from a speech made to the Worshipful Company of Spectacle-makers, in which Dr. Inge said that

'the clergy and other religious teachers are spectacle-makers. It is our business to provide spectacles to help people to see the invisible. It is a very difficult profession; for not only do men and women need a good deal of training before they can see the invisible, but no two people need exactly the same spectacles, nor does any person need the same pair when he is old that he did when he was young' (p. 258).

With regard to the religious life, Dr. Inge thus declares his faith:

'Everlastingness is the time-form of eternity, and while we live here we must be content to think of eternal life under this form, while admitting that it is only symbolic. Our rank in the scale of being is determined by the objects on which we have set our hearts. Good and bad 'mores,' as St. Augustine says, are the result of good and bad "amores." What we are interested in, what we love, that we are. We have no right to assume that we shall be given a second chance, nor that there is any progress in eternity' (p. 281).

In a more practical direction he urges extensive Church reform, for

'The future of the Churches is much more precarious than that of Christianity' (p. 295).

He thinks that all Ordinands should be trained in the psychology of religion, for

'The clergyman of the future will be first and foremost a physician of the soul' (p. 296).

Finally he declares:

'It would, I am sure, greatly strengthen the position of Christianity if we could be content to accept as essential what was enough to bring the original disciples to Christ, and to leave it free to our contemporaries either to take shelter beneath the traditional edifice of dogma or to choose other symbols more in harmony with their own ways of thought,'

and gives as such a minimal basis the Creed of the late Sir Arnold Wilson, printed in the *Spectator* for December 9th, 1932:

'God is spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth . . . The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Amen' (pp. 300-301).

This stimulating book is pleasantly printed in large type. There is a misprint on p. 156, where 'quetistic' should be 'quietistic.'

W. Richardson.

AN ANATOMIST ON MATERIALISM*

Professor Martin as a teacher of biology in the medical school of a Canadian university finds that a number of his students are in difficulties over the anti-religious teaching of modern science, and are eager to know how a keen interest in science can be reconciled with a Christian belief. At the same time he notes that some of his scientific colleagues 'avail themselves of every opportunity for expressing their opinions which are frequently very anti-religious.' He remarks that the majority of modern scientists, especially the biologists, are frank and avowed materialists, and lose no chance for the expression of materialistic opinions. In view of all this Professor Martin has written his book to show that a knowledge of science need not conflict with religious faith.

With regard to science itself he makes some observations not often made by scientists and which may not be popular with them. In fact he may well seem to be attempting to 'debunk' science and its votaries. He says of this austere pursuit that it demands no special or peculiar mental gifts, 'but only a constant and careful exercise of such talents as patience, perseverance, industry, carefulness and curiosity.' We should remember 'the comparative easiness of science,' to which her spectacular triumphs may be due. Perhaps this accounts for the observed fact that a scientist can be a dull fellow with interests limited by his own field of study. Professor Martin also repudiates the romantic notion, distasteful to scientists themselves, that the average man of science is 'a noble figure who unselfishly dedicates his life to a patient pursuit of truth.' The painful fact is that he, like the rest of us, is human and liable to display the defects common to human nature; nevertheless, we should get on badly without him.

It is a pity nevertheless that scientists should be so fond of materialistic views which are a mutilation of human thought. We can envisage our experience from several points of view, and it is a pity to universalize the most poverty-stricken view-point of the lot; for this is what materialism amounts to. The materialist is bound to be a man of little imagination, and on this account he is likely to be a poor scientist, for successful scientific enquiry demands the use of the imagination. But Professor Martin goes into the whole matter very thoroughly, and from a logical point of view leaves the materialist not a leg to stand upon.

Only by establishing as a proven or extremely probable fact the origin of mind from non-mental sources can materialism be made to appear reasonable. Professor Martin holds that evolutionists in general 'have probably grossly exaggerated the survival value of mind, and the Darwinian

* *The Decline of Religion.* By Cecil P. Martin. Allen and Unwin. 10*s.* 6*d.* 1940.

theory offers no satisfactory or convincing explanation of the origin or subsequent increase of intelligence.' And no more satisfactory is the materialistic account of mind as it now exists. It is held to be a function of very complex physical processes, and the theory is that only the extreme complexity of these hinders our expressing mental processes in terms of physical. But a physical investigation, however delicate, difficult and prolonged, can only yield physical information. If the material mechanism of the brain were as plain sailing as the mechanism of a magneto, we should still be where we were. And Professor Martin adduces another point which we do not remember to have seen before. One objection to the reality of mind is that it is never found except in conjunction with a material object, *i.e.* an organism. But of energy it is also true that we only know of its existence by the motion which it imparts to material particles; in a space devoid of such particles it would be quite impossible to detect its presence. Thus mind and energy are in the same boat, though the materialist believes in one and disbelieves in the other.

Another point which the materialists are apt to ignore is that our certainty of the existence of mind is stronger than our certainty of the existence of matter; we are directly aware of the first, while we only infer the existence of the latter. Furthermore, on the materialistic theory of the origin and nature of mind, reason can be reduced to a series of physical processes, *i.e.* to processes which are arbitrary and have to be observed before their outcome can be foretold. We could imagine their opposites being true; but the laws of logic are not arbitrary but immutable, and we cannot imagine their opposites being true. Thus it is inevitable that the materialists should discredit reason even while basing their case upon it.

And another point is adduced by Professor Martin; our conviction that our minds are competent to reason (a conviction shared by the materialists, however illegitimately) is no greater than our conviction that our wills are free. Yet the materialists denounce the freedom of the will as a superstition (since a belief in it totally destroys their case) while accepting the competence of the mind to reason. The materialists seek to have it both ways, to make the best of both worlds, and it cannot be done. Human reason and human freedom stand or fall together. If a man is a mechanism he cannot reason any more than a musical box; as we can see in actual life, for a man's capacity to reason diminishes in exact proportion with the diminution of his freedom. Is reason possible in a totalitarian state, or in a totalitarian church?

This chapter of Professor Martin's, 'The Basis of Reasoning,' is the ablest and most original section of his book; in it he dissects popular scientific materialism with the dexterity of an anatomist with his scalpel.

J. C. Hardwick.

THE GOD OF HISTORY *

In *Supreme Encounter* Mr. Basil Mathews has successfully achieved the most urgent task of this age. He has made the Bible live for our generation. He has made religion *feel* real. He has written a book about Christianity which is as thrilling as a novel, a book so well-informed, so enriched by quotation of the most brilliant gems culled from the Bible, and co-ordinating so many fields of knowledge in a most readable form, that it should prove a most potent instrument of Christian education and evangelism and a mine of material for sermons.

The sub-title is 'The God of History in the World of To-day,' and the purpose of the book is generally to examine the 'problem of the co-existence of the sovereignty of God and the freedom of Man.' But its

> 'aim here is not to examine the issue in terms of ultimate philosophy, but in terms of living, which is the spirit in which the Bible presents all issues' (pp. 13-14).

The author begins by a diagnosis of the disease of our times.

> 'In a real sense this is a lost generation. For, to have surrendered the Faith that was once the common possession of the West, to have failed to discover any fresh perspective in which to find where we are, and to see no goal for our journey, is to be lost. We have all the technical equipment, even down to the sextant and the compass; but there is no fixed star and no pole' (p. 30).

He goes on:

> 'The deep malaise and troubled incertitude into which philosophy has fallen in our times may not in itself directly affect the outlook of the people as a whole. Indirectly, however, such an inquietude among intellectual and spiritual leaders infects those whom they train in the universities for one form or another of national leadership. Uncertainty as to the meaning of life creates a lack of decisive direction in political and economic and even religious action' (p. 31).

Mr. Mathews then inquires:

> 'Is it not possible that the true path along which the philosopher to-day may hope to move is that of reasonable confidence in the authority of what he thinks of as intuition? . . . May not philosophy thus gain some insight even into the problem of evil, as it contemplates the spirit and the process by which the acceptance of unmerited suffering may release a power and grace from the Eternal which can roll back the impending doom?' (p. 33).

Finally, at the end of the two introductory chapters he declares that

> 'the special virtue of the faith held by the prophets of Israel, the faith that finds its ultimate expression and vindication in Jesus, is that God in the life of man breaks that destiny. That faith blows to the winds the one-time inflexible faces of the Greek gods. It affirms in deed as

* *Supreme Encounter.* By Basil Mathews. (Student Christian Movement Press. Publication date September 3rd, 1940. Price 6/-.)

well as in word the victory of the moral order in and over the economic mechanisms and the State authority, which thus become the tool and not the master. . . . That faith is enshrined for us in the Bible' (p. 34).

The history of the religious development of the Hebrews is then traced from Elijah through the prophets—from the recognition of Yahweh as the sole omnipotent God to the acknowledgment of His demands for social justice and of the responsibilities of the nation He has chosen to be His representative and servant. Mr. Mathews sums it up thus in a quotation from Louis Wallis's 'God and the Social Process':

> 'Israel continues to live as a spiritual force, not because it solved the problem of social justice, or constructed a programme literally applicable to our own day, but because it slowly welded the conception of the Divine into the heart of the human struggle for a better world' (p. 49).

With regard to our own day he says:

> 'Those three fragile creations — justice, freedom and truth — are only seen to be ultimately indestructible by those who believe that the Creator and Sustainer of the universe wills them. . . . We may search history in vain, however, to find any other age than our own when the rulers affirm that what seems expedient to them is the sole ground of justice; when freedom is derided and denied, and when truth is made the slave of government so that biologists must rewrite science and historians must falsify history in order to conform to a racial myth; when even art and music and poetry are proscribed unless they fit into racial or national patterns' (p. 50).

In contrast to this the prophets

> 'always proclaimed two superb certainties; that ultimate Reality is a spiritual Person and that His purpose for man is life in a community freely obedient to His will, which is justice and mercy' (p. 64).

What the author says of aesthetics is in this connexion true of ethics also:

> 'The Hebrew felt without speculation the truth to which twentieth-century thought on aesthetics seems now to be moving, that no idea of beauty can be valid unless spiritual reality pervades the universe. Without that all is relative. The beautiful is, to the Hebrew, the revelation of the being and nature of God' (p. 97).

The author might perhaps have brought out more clearly than he does, in dealing with this subject, the fact so often ignored to-day that sociological questions cannot be treated or solved alone. They are a special branch of morals, and their only true and permanent solution must be sought in the sphere of moral improvement and moral enlightenment. He does go some way incidentally to make this clear on p. 88, where he says:

> 'To Ezekiel's' mind, however, God's will could not be equated with any particular social or economic order. He desired justice in any economic or social order that existed.'

In view of some approaches to sociological questions to-day this was worth more emphasis.

From the prophets Mr. Mathews goes on to Jesus and shows how modern psychology and education both agree with and learn from His life, healing methods and teaching. Jesus prayed and drew power therefrom.

> 'The tested experience of psycho-therapeutic clinics in every continent is now convincing scientists of the truths on which Jesus acted. So authoritative a scientist as C. G. Jung, for example, says in his Analytical Psychology, "I have come to the conclusion that these religious and philosophical motive forces . . . must receive positive consideration at the hands of the analysts. . . . He must make them serve biological ends as psychologically valuable factors. Thus, those instincts assume once more those functions that have been there from time immemorial." Dr. Möbius, the neurologist, carries further the attack against unbelief when he says: "If we consider the effect of irreligion as increasing our helplessness to resist the storms of life, its relation to nervousness cannot be doubted" (pp. 134-5). "Prayer is not simply the lifting of man's own soul to a higher level, nor is it the process of asking God to work magic by acting against natural law. Prayer, as the mutual action of the desire of man and the will of God, can make things happen by the right use of the powers and the laws of nature. So events can be determined by the blend of prayer with work; and God and man, working together, become the moulders of history."' (p. 15).

With regard to education Mr. Mathews truly says:

> 'As we stand back and look at His principles and methods of education we discover how far He was ahead of the most authentic insights of our twentieth-century pedagogy and psychology. Education for Him could not be, as it cannot be for us, true education unless it interprets all its subjects in the light of the meaning of the universe. Therefore for Christ and the Christian all education is religious education, that is, it sees the world, and indeed the universe, as the theatre of God's activity' (p. 149).

Departmentalized training in self-contained subjects as mere instruction to equip experts or prepare for earning a living contrasts unfavourably with the University of the Middle Ages in this respect. Moreover

> 'What we clumsily call "the project method" was woven into His work from start to finish. There is no point at which we of the modern world have more tragically missed His way than in not realizing what to Him was fundamental, that knowing and doing are one. The teaching, "he who does shall know," shows that acting on an intuition or revelation paves the way for a deeper knowledge and for taking the next step' (p. 151).

St. Paul's experience of Atonement in the early Church provides the final sign-post for the reconstruction and rejuvenation of society and democracy. St. Paul

> 'saw the psychological fact that while the love of God in a man's heart quickens his love of his fellow-men, conversely in fellowship of man with man he realizes with living reality his communion with God. . . . The experience of individual glory and collective inspiration, although indescribable, is profoundly simple in the sense of being elemental;

> just as falling in love with one person and coming to a new and radiant sense of the beauty of all creation may fuse in one primal experience. . . . St. Paul sees that love, not as an abstract quality, but as creative energy. Love creates "insight and all manner of perception." "Being rooted and grounded in love" makes men able to comprehend with all the Community of God "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; . . . and be filled with all the fulness of God." Love is energy charged with revolutionary moral meaning that drives with potent force to action on new lines' (pp. 165-6).

The conclusion for our times is that since democracy springs from and is rooted in Christianity and the Bible, if it is to survive and triumph over opposing fanatical creeds and faiths, it must recover and nourish its own strong faith in God as manifested in history through the prophets to Jesus. Therefrom it must be fired with active, energetic love to redeem and rebuild society. The necessary method is a Christian education as thorough and all-embracing as the most comprehensive totalitarian education and the permeation of all corners of society by keen Christian believers inspired by the love which inspired Paul. There lies the special task of the devoted Christian layman in school and factory, tram and drawing-room, and Mr. Mathews' book blazes a trail on the way to the goal of making that faith better understood and more real and that Christian education more acceptable to all. The book deserves a wide circulation.

There are two misprints. On p. 100 'And there have been no latter rain' should read 'And there hath' or 'has been' (*Jer.* iii, 3); and on p. 102 'raukh,' the Hebrew word for 'wind' or 'breath,' should be 'ruakh.'

W. RICHARDSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

SACRAMENTAL RELIGION AND THE ENGLISH LAITY.

SIR,

I am glad to find that Mr. Lindfield can accept my diagnosis of our present religious apathy as outlined in my article, 'Obstacles and Aids to the Spirit,' but I am extremely doubtful whether the cure can possibly lie in a revival of sacramental religion, even when sacraments are regarded, as Mr. Lindfield rightly regards them, as means not as ends. Such as it has been in the past thirty years my own experience has confirmed the view, expressed by yourself, that 'English folk are not sacramental in their religion, nor do I think that they will ever be so unless some fundamental change takes place in their mental and emotional make-up.'

I am unfortunately no historian, but I think a good case could be made out for the view that all this extreme sacramentalism is a product of the Counter-Reformation, and characteristic of post-Tridentine rather than of mediaeval Catholicism. The conscious or subconscious motive of it would be to revive the lost prestige of the priest, for if there can be no salvation

without sacraments and no sacraments without a priest, the priest is a *sine qua non*. The catholic revival in the English Church has unfortunately looked to post-Tridentine Catholicism for its ideas and methods, but the trouble is that the people will not take the Anglican priest at his own valuation based on those ideas and methods which do not at all appeal to the English laity. Their distaste is largely instinctive, but nevertheless a watertight intellectual case, historical, psychological and philosophical, as well as religious, could be made out in support of it.

The English clergy will not win the real respect of the English laity by turning themselves into mass-priests, but by turning themselves into experts in religion. The modern Englishman respects an expert, but has the completest contempt for a charlatan. To be a specialist in the religious sphere is not easy, but there are several forms that such specialism can take. A man can be an expert, for example, in the technique of prayer, meditation, contemplation, and so on, practising such activities himself and enabling others to do likewise. Or secondly, he can be an expert in the cure of souls, with sympathetic knowledge and experience of human beings, and with something more than a merely empirical technique for helping them to attain mental and emotional health. Or thirdly, a man can be an expert in the philosophical and intellectual side of religion, for it is certain that no religion can survive without an intellectual basis, and men who were known to be working on this with complete intellectual honesty and capacity would be respected and their efforts valued.

Although I said in my article that intellectual difficulties did not occupy a prominent place in the minds of most people, I am myself of the opinion, and have been for many years, that the weakness of contemporary religion is due to the fact that its intellectual basis is generally felt to have been so sapped and mined that the whole edifice may collapse at any moment. And the people do not trust the intellectual integrity of the clergy because it is known that they are professionally tied to certain opinions, many of which are known to be highly disputable.

But I fear that this will be an old story to most of your readers, and not least to Mr. Lindfield himself. I would not wish to end on a negative note, and think perhaps I have outlined some sort of an alternative to the revival of sacramentalism. The alternative is that we should provide somehow a body of clergy who are not mass-priests but experts in one or other or all three of the lines indicated above.

J. C. HARDWICK.

Partington Vicarage,
Manchester.

'THE QUEST FOR A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.'

SIR,

May I suggest that those engaged in this vital quest should reconsider the work and teaching of Dr. Albert Schweitzer? His philosophy of Reverence for Life has long appeared to some of us to be just the mode of thought for which this distressful age is thirsting, a philosophy, moreover, expressed in such simple terms that it can be understood by all. The Hon. D.D. of Oxford, Edinburgh and Dublin Universities, the thinker chosen by the Hibbert and Gifford Trustees and approved by such theologians as Professors Sanday and Burkitt in England and Paterson and Curtis in Scotland can hardly deserve to be neglected.

At his Hospital in French Equatorial Africa, Dr. Schweitzer is now working on Volumes III and IV of his 'Philosophy of Civilisation.' Mean-

while, Vol. I, 'The Decay and the Restoration of Civilisation' (Black, pp. 105), and Vol. II, 'Civilization and Ethics' (Black, pp. 285, second edition, transl. by Campion—*not* first edition), especially chapters xvii to xxii of the latter, sufficiently expound his thought and justify his claim that the power of the elementary and living spirituality to be found in Reverence for Life is beyond calculation, and will eventually bring peace to mankind. Dr. Schweitzer has written too, 'Christianity, as the most profound religion, is to me at the same time the most profound philosophy' ('Christianity and the Religions of the World,' p. 83).

LILIAN M. RUSSELL.

Strone, by Dunoon Argyll.
February 25, 1941.

REUNION.

SIR,

In your editorial on the above subject you quote certain conclusions from reunion negotiation extending over more than half a century. The second conclusion runs as follows:

> 'That the various Reformed Churches, excluding the Church of England, while freely practising intercommunion and interchange of pulpits among themselves, and willing to extend this fraternal practice to Anglicans, are not prepared for organic union, nor to accept an episcopally ordained ministry as a prerequisite for it.'

You say that the situation looks like a deadlock. Alas! so it does, but deadlocks, like other obstructions, cry out to be surmounted. Now the interchange of pulpits seems to me to be the top brick of the obstruction, and efforts should be continued to remove it at once.

In the archives of the M.C.U. lies a circular which I had the privilege of drafting many years ago for the Council. It was circulated by the Union to all the Bishops, many of whom did not deign to reply.

Now, we are all drawn together by a common danger; we appreciate the difficulties of others; co-operation is in the air. The soil is ripe for the casting of another seed of goodwill which may this time not fall on barren ground. Once we have freed the pulpit from its episcopal shackles, we may remove those on intercommunion during our long journey towards one flock under one Shepherd, and do something to fulfil our ninth aim by 'fostering fellowship and co-operation in *Word* and *Sacrament* with other Christian Societies.'

GILBERT COLERIDGE.

Haverfield House,
Kew Green,
Surrey.
February 19, 1941.

CORRECTIONS.

The following corrections should be made in the February *M.C.*:—

p. 288. The signature of the letter entitled 'The Sin of the Closed Mind' should be J. A. H. BOWER, not J. A. H. Brown.

p. 469. The last three lines from the Spens Report should run: '. . . and, very significantly, it can hardly be disputed that the best teacher is one whose interests in the subject and desire to teach it proceed from religious faith' (pp. 10-11).

ED., *M.C.*